

LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT



Long Term Player Development

The recent FA review under the direction of Sir Trevor Brooking recommended the integration of all football in an effort to introduce a logical player development and coach education pathway for all.

Subsequently, The FA has modified its coach education programme in order to embrace a wider player development focus within the current framework. This approach supports the principles of the recently proposed Sport England “Long Term Athlete Development” (LTAD) programme.

Following consultation, The FA has introduced the title; **Long Term ‘Player’ Development (LTPD)** which was felt to be more aligned to the player development and coach education pathways in football

Moving forward

This initiative is in line with the ongoing coach education review for the coach, teacher and parent and will integrate LTPD into existing FA courses. The support for player and coach development pathways includes technical, physical, psychological and social development.

Given the diversity of participation in football, The FA has decided to adopt an 8 stage model of Long Term Player Development as shown here. This example describes an age appropriate development pathway over time. The recommendations for the younger age groups being aligned to the schools key stages wherever possible;

- **Stages 1-2:** 5 to 11 year old primary school ages (small sided games played)
- **Stages 3-4:** 11 to 16 year old secondary school ages (11 v 11 games played)
- **Stages 5-6:** 16 to 20 year old school leaver age groups
- **Stage 7:** 20+ the mature player example
- **Stage 8:** Retention, for any participant who is retained within football

Building flexibility around the model accommodates the diverse needs of all players and support staff, whilst the central model offers the foundation for the varied strands of participants. (for example; gender issues, schools, counties, communities, professional clubs, disability teams, futsal, free play, etc.)

All have the opportunity for developing their own particular Long Term Player Development strand from the central programme with support from The FA as the national governing body.

As such, The FA presents a model which supports a fully inclusive participation policy for all.

Introduction to Long Term 'Player' Development

Stages 1-2	Stages 3-4	Stages 5-6	Stage 7-8
1. FUNdamentals 5 to 8 years old Ages may overlap ±	3. Developing practice 11 to 14 years old Ages may overlap ±	5. Understanding competition 16 to 18 years old Ages may overlap ±	7. Training to win 20 years old plus Ages may overlap ±
2. Enjoying practice 8 to 11 years old PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE	4. Training for competition 14 to 16 years old SECONDARY SCHOOL AGE	6. Developing winning 18 to 20 years old SCHOOL LEAVER AGE	8. Retaining people in football Any age applies MATURE ADULT AGE

The variations examples;

Variations within The FA LTPD Model



These variations allow for change and meeting the needs of the player

LTPD has at its core a picture of age and maturity appropriate activity with a balance on practice and competition. Beginning with chronological age, the model takes account of varying maturity status and the impact this may have in groups of mixed ability players.

For example; proposals within the model comprise of;

- Age specific development
- Increased practice opportunity
- Meeting individual needs
- Seasonal programming
- Long term planning
- Progressive demand
- Recognising key stages
- Maximising potential

The LTPD programme has a relationship with **The 4 Corner development model**, which includes;



The timeline example;

Chronological Age, Growth and Maturity phases



The three examples shown below would appear to be a logical description of a suitable foundation for the progress of young children who are beginning to experience LTPD.

1. Skill acquisition - The interwoven phases are;

- a) Technique development – mastering the ball.
- b) Physical development – athletic movement.
- c) Combining and effectively executing the correct technique, movement and decision on demand
- d) Transferring these components effectively into match-play

2. For the coach in a football context; two factors to avoid are 'Anxiety and Boredom'.

- Anxiety may occur primarily when the coach expects too much from young players
- Boredom may occur when the coach expects too little

3. The priorities for players are;

- To enjoy their football experience and improve their techniques
- To develop their movement and discover the benefits of learning

The differences;

How will differences within a group be shown?



Different groups will emerge from any chosen task and will require appropriate individual challenges.

A different task will often have an effect on players, for example; moving from '*Forging Ahead*' to '*Striving to keep up*'

With this in mind; the ideal scenario for both short and long term player development is to meet the individual developmental needs of the players' as often as realistically possible.

Summary

LTPD is in accord with the schools physical education and sports programmes; these provide opportunities for young children to experience a multi-sport environment before they choose their preference – hopefully football.

This choice of sport will to some extent depend on the impression the children have during their football activities. Therefore, it is in every ones interest within football to make this participation as enjoyable as possible; certainly to the point where children are motivated to come back for more.

Note

The examples of player development issues in this introduction to LTPD are addressed in a general manner.

It is recognised that specific needs of children require individual reviews at a personal and local level.

The views expressed are with awareness in mind, they are not prescriptive or in any way demonstrating the many alternatives available.